

Five Delaware farm families honored for a century of farm ownership

Photographs available from event on [Flickr](#).

DOVER, Del. – The Delaware Department of Agriculture honored five Delaware farm families for their continued commitment to farming the same land for a century or more.

“I don’t think many people realize how few farms there are across the United States that have actually have been in the same farm family for 100 years,” said Delaware Secretary of Agriculture Michael T. Scuse. “For us to have 148 farms after today, that is a tremendous accomplishment for any state, let alone a state the size of Delaware. I want to commend these families for being able to keep the farm in the family.”

The [Delaware Century Farm Program](#) was established in 1987 to honor farm families who have owned and farmed their land for at least 100 years. The farms must include at least 10 acres of the original parcel or gross more than \$10,000 annually in agricultural sales.

Delaware Century Farm families receive a sign for their farms, an engraved plate, a certificate, and legislative tributes.

“This is an opportunity to recognize Delaware farm families who have persevered through not just one year of farming, which can be bad enough, but over 100 years of farming and all that goes with it. From drought to floods to bad prices to pests to inheritance taxes to try and figure out a way to pass a farm from one generation to another, all of these are challenges that these five farm families have faced over the past 100 or more years” said Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Austin Short. “In today’s society when so many small

businesses seldom last as long as one or two generations, to see how these farm families have stayed in business and farming for over 100 years is quite an accomplishment and well worth celebrating."

2019 Delaware Century Farm Awardees:

Patricia Warren Carlson and Family (Felton, Kent County): The Carlson family is recognized for their 477-acre family farm located in Mispillion Hundred.

In 1876, John M. Warren was the highest bidder at \$3,600 purchasing his deceased father's 477-acre farm after finding that no deed was ever recorded for his father's farm. When John M. Warren died in 1880, the farm passed to his nine children-Charles, Angelica, Sarah, Florence, Ada, Mary, Ella, Albert and Cora. In 1941, Albert's son, Albert D. Warren obtained full ownership of the entire farm which was left to his wife Elva G. Warren in 1982 before entering into a family trust in 2011. Upon Elva Warren's death, the farm passed to her daughter, Patricia Warren Carlson who subsequently placed the farm into her trust.

Over the last 100 years the principal crops grown on the farm are corn, wheat, barley, and soybeans. Research conducted by the family traced the land's history to a land grant issued by Delaware's colonial proprietor, William Penn.

Wayne C. and Nancy J. Carmean and Family (Millsboro, Sussex County): The Carmean family is recognized for their 50-acre farm located in the Indian River Hundred.

In 1919, John C. Carmean purchased this 50-acre parcel for \$1,350. Mr. Carmean and his wife Stella had seven children – J. Oscar, Bonard, Hester, Gladys, Delbert, Herman and Barbara. Upon John's passing in 1966, Stella transferred her interest to her seven children and her children's spouses. On January 21, 1977 Wayne C. Carmean (Delbert's Son) and his wife Nancy J. Carmean purchased the farm from the remaining family

members.

The farm has mainly produced grains during the Carmean family's ownership, including corn, soybeans and wheat.

Granville L. and Dorothy B. Conaway and Family (Georgetown, Sussex County): The Conaway family is recognized for their 114-acre farm in Dagsboro Hundred, near Georgetown.

Minos T. Conaway purchased the original 115-acre farm at a sheriff sale in 1894 for \$1,000. When Minos T. Conaway died in 1910, the farm was passed to his widow, Virginia, and their six children-Raymond, Fred, John, Minos, Elsie and Larry. In 1942, Minos' son, Raymond and his wife, Vertia purchased the farm from his mother and the remaining family, except for one acre that was transferred to Cecil Reed (Hattie Reed). In 1957, Raymond and Vertia transferred the farm to their son Granville L. Conaway and his wife Dorothy.

The family has grown corn, soybeans, wheat, barley, watermelons, timber, and broilers. The Conaway family has grown their operation from the original land to encompass nearly 2,000 acres.

The Truitt Family (Seaford, Sussex County): The Truitt family is recognized for the 133 acres of farm land known as Lin-Lo Farms in Seaford Hundred.

In 1900, Harvey L. Truitt purchased 133 acres and 94 perches farm from Ann J. Williams for \$1,500. Following Mr. Truitt's death, the farm transferred to his wife Mary for life, then to their son Fred for life, and then to Harvey and Mary's grandson, Howard Melvin Truitt. After Fred's passing in 1967 and Mary's passing in 1982, Howard became the farm's sole owner. In 1983, Howard transferred the 133-acre and 94 perches farm to Lin-Lo Farms, Inc. in which Howard and his two daughters, Linda and Lois are the members.

Over the years, the Truitt family has grown a variety of crops

including: fruits and vegetables, wheat, corn, soybeans, barley, and hay. Over time the family has also raised chickens, cows, and hogs. The family has expanded this farm to more than 400 acres, with a focus on growing grain.

The Webb Family (Ellendale, Sussex County): The Webb family is recognized for the 34-acre farm located in Cedar Creek Hundred, west of Ellendale.

The family has owned the 34-acre wooded parcel since 1898, but it is believed to be part of a larger parcel of land the family has owned since before 1884. Records show that upon his death in August 1884, Henry Deputy transferred eight farms totaling 1,124 acres to his widow Sarah Ann and their five children – William Henry, Samuel, Anna, Jane and Mary – and it is believed that one of these farms contains the 34-acre woodlot described below; however, the family cannot yet verify this.

In 1898, Samuel Deputy and his wife Mary transferred the 34-acre woodlot to his older brother William H. Deputy. When William H. Deputy died in 1920, this 34-acre woodlot, along with other land, were divided into five contiguous tracts of land and given jointly to his sons – William Henry and Charles Frederick. In 1962, the five tracts of land were split between the brothers and their families. William Henry and his daughter, Viva Webb and son-in-law W. Truitt Webb, received Tracts 1 and 2, and Charles Frederick and his wife Vina Deputy received Tracts 3, 4, and 5, with tract 5 being the 34-acre woodlot. In 1964, Charles Frederick transferred the three tracts to his niece Viva Webb and her husband. In 1991, the entire farm was placed into a family trust. In 2018 the entire farm was transferred to Webb Family Farms, LLC, which is comprised of Viva Webb's four great-granddaughters.

The original 34-acre woodlot has remained in forestland throughout the family's ownership producing timber.

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